

# The ethnicity of knowledge: statistics and *Landeskunde* in late eighteenth-century Hungary and Transylvania

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This essay discusses the emerging field of statistics in the multiethnic lands of the Habsburg Monarchy. It analyzes how the science of the social realm used ethnographic description (*Völkerbeschreibung*) to underscore the claims to the social predominance of German and Hungarian elites in Hungary and Transylvania. It is known that the end of the eighteenth century corresponds to the institutionalization of a number of scholarly disciplines in the academic centers of the Holy Roman Empire. These disciplines developed in the framework of the German tradition of state sciences (*Staatswissenschaften*), as well as the philological, historical and ethnographic fieldwork of German scholars in the Central and Northern Asian territories of Russia. Ethnography as a descriptive and comparative study of peoples emerged thus from a quasi-colonial context in Siberia, to be adopted later as an academic discipline in the institutions of composite and multiethnic states. Both in Russia and the German and Habsburg context the scientific exploration of the human resources served economic-administrative purposes. It had to be the adequate tool of governing social differences, the latter being ‘translated’ in ethno-cultural terms by ethnographers<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> J. Stagl, “August Ludwig Schlözer and the Study of Mankind according to Peoples”, in Idem, *A History of Curiosity. The Theory of Travel 1550-1800* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995), 233-268; H. F. Vermeulen, *Early History of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment: Anthropological Discourse in Europe and Asia, 1710-1808* (University of Leiden, Ph. D. dissertation, 2008), [http://media.leidenuniv.nl/legacy/vermeulen\\_summary.pdf](http://media.leidenuniv.nl/legacy/vermeulen_summary.pdf) (visited on 30.12.2009).

A generic 'symbolic geography' inscribing cultural inequalities in the nascent social sciences about East-Central and Southern-Europe has been duly recognized by Larry Wolff, Maria Todorova and their followers in the 1990s<sup>2</sup>. Usually, these accounts followed the post-colonial thrust of Edward Said, without however tracing the specific dynamics of the contemporary, i. e. late eighteenth-century German-speaking scholarly field. The latter has been a more recent development, where historians of ethnology, linguistics and ethnography have scrutinized more closely the transfer of analytic methods, scientific disciplines, taxonomies and categories, and their impact on ethnic mapping in the imperial context<sup>3</sup>. A distinguishing aspect of statistical accounts from the region is indeed a hierarchical image of the society, whose constituting elements differ from one another by language, religion, ethnic descent, as well as manners, customs and refinement. Such a social image is reminiscent of the famous categories of Scottish conjectural historians. How can this 'statistical gaze' be characterized, and who were the practitioners of this discipline?

In my essay I focus on the first major modern statistical account of the Kingdom of Hungary, written in German, by Martin Schwartner (1759-1823), professor of diplomatics and library custodian at the newly founded university of Buda/Pest. Schwartner had studied at the University of Göttingen, and his major work, entitled *Statistik des Königreichs Ungern*, reflects a profound knowledge of the Göttingen historical statistical school, but also the English political arithmetic. His innovative comparative method, his use of a great variety of sources, was not only a popular read of his time – the book was reedited three times in the lifetime of its author, and translated into French, and in Hungarian. It was also widely read by politicians and experts of the Hungarian Reform Era in the 1830s<sup>4</sup>.

2 Besides the well-known works of Larry Wolff, Maria Todorova, see more recently *Creating the Other. Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, ed. N. M. Wigfield (New York-Oxford: Berghan Books, 2003), W. Höpgen, "Ethnische Stereotype in Südsteuropa. Anmerkungen zu Charakter, Funktion und Entstehungsbedingungen" [Ethnic stereotypes in South-East Europe. Notes about its character, function and circumstances of its emergence], in *Das Bild des Anderen in Siebenbürgen* [The Image of the Other in Transylvania], eds. K. Gündisch, W. Höpgen and M. Markel (Köln-Weimar-Vienna: Böhlau, 1998), 7-31.

3 S. Sörlin, "Ordering the World for Europe: Science as Intelligence and Information as Seen from the Northern Periphery", in *Nature and Empire: Science and the Colonial Enterprise*, ed. Roy MacLeod, *Osiris*, 15 (2000): 65-67; L. Koerner, "Daedalus Hyperboreus: Baltic Natural History and Mineralogy in the Enlightenment", in *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe*, eds. William Clark, Jan Golinski, and Simon Schaffer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 389-422; Idem, *Linnaeus: Nature and Nation* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1999).

4 M. Schwartner, *Statistik des Königreichs Ungern. Ein Versuch von Martin Schwartner, Professor der Diplomatie, und erstem Bibliothek-Custos auf der Kön. Ungarischen Universität zu Pest* (Pest: Matthias Trattner, 1798; 2<sup>nd</sup> enlarged edition in 3 vols., 1809-11; 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1815; also French edition in 3 vols., 1813-16). See also K. Gönczi, *Die europäischen Fundamente der ungarischen Rechtskultur. Juristischer Wissenstransfer und nationale Rechtswissenschaft in Ungarn zur Zeit der Aufklärung und Vormärz* (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 2008).

Statistics (*Staatenkunde*, in Hungarian *honismeret*) was part of the broader *Staatswissenschaften*. It was a field characteristic for the enlightened 'statistical gaze', that is, an encyclopedic mapping of the social realm. It was 'experiential' and 'open-air', based on empirical perception that distinguished it from the traditional academic practice. As a university discipline studying the state, its creation, order, and government, it was meant to train an emerging bureaucracy<sup>5</sup>. Also, it was inseparable from another 'modern' phenomenon, the creation of a scholarly public with its characteristic institutions both in the centers of learning and their provinces in Europe, thanks to a growing educated constituency, that benefited from the intensifying international circulation of knowledge. From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, loosely connected networks emerged around German universities, including scholars from Switzerland to Prussia, extending into the Balticum and into Saint Petersburg. Yet, one cannot speak about scholarly modernization without considering its most important local feature, the vernacularization of knowledge. The status of German scholarship is remarkable in this process, since it simultaneously figures as the accepted educational norm (also in university education), but also as part of a policy imposed from above (e.g. in Hungarian-speaking intellectual milieus).

Within this dynamics the role of German-speaking scholars, closely connected to the vanguard of German universities (Göttingen, Tübingen, Halle, Jena) has been obscured by Hungarian historiography, although the latter had an important mediating position between the local and international (i.e. German-speaking) academic milieus. They were the arbiters of the measures of 'improvement' of their non-German compatriots, which bordered on arrogant 'othering' and orientalizing gestures towards the 'less cultivated' citizens. On the other hand, the entire discipline of state science carried a conservative social vision; even the North-German vanguard of its practitioners, including the renown Göttingen professor, August Ludwig von Schlözer, were no advocates of social emancipation<sup>6</sup>. What about the Hungarian adaptation?

5 Schwartner, *Statistik* (Pest: 1798), 5; H. E. Bödeker, "On the Origins of the 'Statistical Gaze': Modes of Perception, Forms of Knowledge and Ways of Writing in the Early Social Sciences", in *Little Tools of Knowledge. Historical Essays on Academic and Bureaucratic Practices*, eds. P. Becker and W. Clark (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), 169-171; David F. Lindenfeld, *The Practical Imagination. The German Sciences of State in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997); M. Raeff, "The Well-Ordered Police State and the Development of Modernity in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Europe: An Attempt at a Comparative Approach", *The American Historical Review*, 80, 5 (December 1975): 1221-1243.

6 For a few examples from the vast literature on the topic, see Holger Krahnke, *Reformtheorien zwischen Revolution und Restauration. Die 'gesamte Politik' an der Universität Göttingen im ersten Drittel des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 1999); Notker Hammerstein, *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte*, 2: 18. Jahrhundert: vom späten 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Neuordnung Deutschlands um 1800 (München: Beck, 2005); *Bildung, Politik und Gesellschaft. Studien zur Geschichte des europäischen Bildungswesens vom 16. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Grete Klingenstein (München: Oldenbourg, 1978); Lindenfeld, *The Practical Imagination*; J. Van Horn Melton, "From Enlightenment to Revolution. Hertzberg, Schlözer, and the Problem of Despotism in the Aufklärung", *Central European History*, 12 (1979): 103-123.

Schwartner's *Statistik des Königreichs Ungern*, the first professional work of its kind in Hungary, sets out with a social panorama of a country:

In no other country of the world are more languages, – and because of that, more nations – than in Hungary. Hungary, partly as far as the history reaches back, [was] the residence of the most numerous people of the Slavs, was since the fourth century the receiving place [Gasthof] of the barbarians attacking the Roman world, the refuge of the displaced Romans, the passage way of violent crusades, the comfortable fireplace of the Gipsy, as the frontier of the Christian world, the scene of European courage and Asian-Turkish savageness, but ever since also the Dorado of the German par excellence, especially of the diligent Saxons and the prolific Swabians. Italians and Savoyards must have been more frequent in Hungary than now. Such a large and diverse amalgamation of peoples and nations, of which in the old times none was much more advanced in culture [Cultur] than the other, had to result in a great linguistic diversity. Thus as great as the religious diversity is in today's Holland, it is as much variety in languages in Hungary<sup>7</sup>.

We are in the *medias res* of ethno-linguistic diversity. Indeed, the ethnic distinction is the most dominant feature of Schwartner's categories. Their dynamics are framed by the historically developing Hungarian state, which itself makes part of the great tableau of world history (as known from Schlözer's *Allgemeine Nordische Geschichte*<sup>8</sup>). The vision of Hungary as threshold between civilized and Christian Europe and Asian barbarism and thus a locus of irreconcilable opposites is more than a rhetorical cliché, but the very ideological framework for explaining the country's social diversity. Already in the opening passage, the players of the historical drama, i. e. the enlisted ethnic constituents, are qualified via their morality and status of improvement – they carry permanent adjectives in the manner of the heroes of the classic myths. But history has a secondary role in statistics; the main concern is oriented at the present affairs of the state:

[...] the government triggers the state machine. It is called government-police, government-constitution, and also government administration [...]. The aim of this activity is to be effective. [...] How and through which institutions does the government lead the citizen to his happiness? How close or how far is he from it? [...] What does the government do for the security of the citizen in the state, in regard to the sustenance of his life, for his health? In regard with his proliferation? Through supporting the marriages, through new colonies etc., in respect to his goods, his honor etc. Against his fellow citizens through administration and law, against the foreign citizens via arms, fortresses, peace treaties? [...] (through religion, the sciences, the arts) to make the subject virtuous and enlightened [...] to make him rich, [...] (through supporting agriculture, trade, factories and commerce) to make his life comfortable? [...] and to finance all these institutions, the state needs income.

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<sup>7</sup> Schwartner, *Statistik*, 32-33.

<sup>8</sup> August Ludwig Schlözer, *Allgemeine Nordische Geschichte* (Halle, 1771).

Where does it come from, how much is it, who pays it, how much cash there is in the cash desk of the state?)<sup>9</sup>.

Indeed, both in the Habsburg Monarchy and the German states, state science and its sub-disciplines were the novel interpretative framework for effective state management. A loosely defined field that varied from university to university, involving lectures in economics, statistics, finance, politics, police science (*Polizeiwissenschaft*, meaning approximately 'public administration'), agriculture, forestry, mining, 'technology', and social policy, it emphasized the comprehensiveness and systematic knowledge of the state. Throughout the eighteenth century, specialization was no priority, but rather the establishment of categories to describe the particularities of the social and physical environment and the historical-legal development of the polity<sup>10</sup>. After 1750, state sciences boomed in the German states; until the 1790s nine new university chairs were created despite the general decline of higher education. An alternative curriculum of the sciences of state came out of Göttingen, one that merged cameralism with legal studies, and combined portions of it with history and statistics. Within the larger international field of state science, the systematic description of the state was called *Statistik* or *Staatenkunde* by Gottfried Achenwall, who developed it into a discipline of its own. It was closely connected to politics, and embraced the descriptive investigation of the entire public, legal, economic, financial, military and cultural condition of individual states<sup>11</sup>.

The discipline owed to the taxonomy of Linneus, also in its preference for the physical: weather, topography, population, natural resources, and animal life, a strong interest in natural science, with an emphasis on the particularities (*Merkwürdigkeiten*) of the fatherland. It was not present-centric, but integrated a historical perspective, whether antiquarian or constitutional – a feature characteristic to the Göttingen tradition. Here history and statistics interconnected (where history did not consist only of the biographies of kings or the chronicles of battles, but also of their agriculture, commerce, legal systems etc. – the very subjects of statistics): "history is continuous statistics, and statistics is static history"<sup>12</sup>.

The term *Staatsmerkwürdigkeiten* (meaning "actual state peculiarities") deserves special attention here. A concept introduced by Hermann Conring (*Exercitatio historico-politica de notitia singularis alicuius reipublicae*) and translated

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9 Schwartzner, *Statistik*, 7-8

10 See for instance Christian Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedanken von dem gesellschaftlichen Leben der Menschen, und insonderheit dem gemeinen Wesen* (Halle, 1721); Lindenfeld, *Practical Imagination*, 14.

11 Lindenfeld, *Practical Imagination*, 39-40; Bödeker, "Statistical Gaze," 172.

12 A. L. von Schlözer, *Theorie der Statistik: nebst Ideen über das Studium der Politik überhaupt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1804); Bödeker, "Statistical Gaze", 175; Lindenfeld, *Practical Imagination*, 44; see also Schwartzner, *Statistik*, 2-4.

into German by Gottfried Achenwall, it designated any domain worthy of perception<sup>13</sup>. The definition of what could be classified as a *Staatsmerkwürdigkeit* changed over time – for Conring the criteria was the impact of the documented facts on the well-being of a state – and principally it designated the data that were relevant for the state administration, such as land extension and population. His first group of “state particularities” referred to the territory, and comprised the topography and produces, the second one to the population, which was characterized after its a) numerical extension, b) nature and morality, c) as citizens, inhabitants, and so on. The subsequent groups rendered legal, political, and administrative information<sup>14</sup>. Schlözer too endowed every “fact” of the social world with statistical meaning, so *Statistik* became an all-encompassing repository for the study of social life. In a similar vein, Achenwall emphasized the immediate political relevance in governmental practices, of defining and classifying the “state particularities”:

The statistician seeks to pick only those data among the numberless peculiarities on the territory of the state, and to fathom their causes, that indicate certain virtues or defects of the state, which raise or dampen the glory of the crown, make the subjects rich or poor, satisfied or dissatisfied, [make] the government beloved or abominable, that make the authority of the ruler within the state or outside of it more or less feared, which benefits some states and shakes and shatters others, which means stability for one of them and failure to the other, that is, which leads to any extent to the thorough knowledge of the political structure of a certain state<sup>15</sup>.

The data were arranged along the administrative map of the country; hence a close connection between geography and statistics. The presentation of facts took place both in narrative form (history) as well as in the shape of descriptions. The methods were ‘plain air’, to be practiced outdoors – hence the preference for scientific hikes and travels – and fostered exchange among the practitioners<sup>16</sup>. There was a distribution of tasks, and while engaged amateurs were responsible for the collection of data, trained academics, the *Stubenforscher*, were in charge with the processing and classification. The emerging scholarly societies and learned journals participated in networks of correspondence worldwide, and exchanged scientific data. Based on the information they possessed, they could function as experts, political counselors, and political journalists – following the example set by scholars

<sup>13</sup> Arno Seifert, “Conring und die Begründung der Staatenkunde”, in *Hermann Conring (1606-1681). Beiträge zum Leben und Werk*, ed. Michael Stolleis (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1983), 200-214.

<sup>14</sup> Dr. M. Hugó, *Schwartner Márton és a statisztika állása a XVIII és XIX század fordulóján* [Martin Schwartner and the state of the art of statistics at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries] (Budapest, 1905), 73-74.

<sup>15</sup> G. Achenwall, “Vorbereitung”, in *Idem, Staatsverfassung der heutigen vornehmsten Europäischen Reiche und Völker*, seventh edition (Göttigen, 1790), 9.

<sup>16</sup> Bödeker, “Statistical Gaze”, 178, 184; Lowood, “Science for the Fatherland”, 210-211, 239-240.



like Schlözer, they all ran journals to publish their findings and to convey their readers the “useful truths”<sup>17</sup>.

The way the pragmatically yet vaguely defined ‘matters of state’ were interpreted by the followers of Conring, Achenwall and Schlözer, including the professors of state science at the university of Pest, is an interesting question in the history of statistics. All in all, the survey of the state consisted of two separate branches of inquiry. While the first one was more engaged with the functioning of the state as a political entity (Herzberg, Remer, Playfair, Peuchet, Donnant, Mannert, Ignaz de Luca), the second concerned itself with the functioning of the social realm<sup>18</sup>. Adepts of this second branch (M. Ch. Sprengel, Mader, A. F. Lüder, and John Sinclair) were interested in the synchronic and diachronic description of the population. Schwartner united ambitiously the two perspectives in his analysis, subordinating them to the normative vision of the absolutist state.

## II. THE RELEVANCE OF THE STATE SCIENCES IN HUNGARY AND TRANSYLVANIA

As higher learning was needed above all in a growing state bureaucracy under Theresa and her son Joseph II, an interest in university training at the end of the eighteenth century signals the emergence of new social groups in these positions, also in Hungary and the neighboring Transylvania. The reform of state administration opened new chances to the lower social elites, who advocated the ethos of learning as a way of social advancement. The training of clergymen and professors (the two tracks were close and co-dependent) at universities abroad had been an established custom since the Middle Ages, and intensified in an unprecedented way in the decades of the absolutist reforms. By the end of the eighteenth century, the University of Vienna was the most progressive university in the empire. Joseph von Sonnenfels taught here his courses on *Policey- und Kameralwissenschaft*, and his lectures on *Staatistik* were compulsory for future pastors and professors. For all the reservation of the Protestants, the university remained one of the most frequented institutes by students from Hungary and Transylvania – and more influential than its counterparts Jena, Halle, Göttingen, Berlin, Leiden, or Utrecht<sup>19</sup>.

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17 Lowood, “Science for the Fatherland”, 223, 229-231.

18 J. E. Fabri, *Lehrbuch der Statistik* (Leipzig, 1792); G. Meusel, *Lehrbuch der Statistik* (Leipzig, 1804); Idem, *Literatur der Statistik* (Leipzig, 1790).

19 See I. Futaky, *Göttinga. A göttingeni Georg-August Egyetem magyarországi és erdélyi kapcsolatai a felvilágosodás idején és a reformkor kezdetén* [Göttingen. The Hungarian and Transylvanian contacts of the Georg-August University during the time of Enlightenment and the Reform Era] (Budapest: ELTE Levéltár, 2007); L. Szögi, *Magyarországi diákok németországi egyetemeken és 1789-1919* [Students from Hungary at German universities and colleges, 1789-1919] (Budapest: ELTE Levéltár, 2001); M. Szabó and L. Szögi, *Erdélyi peregrinusok. Erdélyi diákok európai egyetemeken, 1701-1849* [Transylvanian Peregrines. Transylvanian students at European universities] (Tîrgu Mureş: Mentor, 1998), 21, 23-25.

The destinations of university studies too differed by religion and language, although the bulk was of protestant German origin. Lutherans traditionally attended the Pietistic citadels (Halle, Jena, Tübingen and Heidelberg). Towards the end of the century the newly founded and exclusive Göttingen with its distinguished professors became attractive to many non-German Protestants as well. Hungarians joined their German compatriots relatively late at the Northern universities – studies in German were supposedly an extra burden for these students educated in Latin. Also, state science was first and foremost cultivated by Lutheran Germans, having at least some education at a German university – mostly in Göttingen. Hungarians started relatively later, and coined a Magyar-language word for the concept: *honismeret*. Last but not least, German *Staatenkunde/Landeskunde* was more prolific than its Hungarian counterpart; it strove to create an overall map of all the peoples of the country, a project that involved an exchange between Hungarian and German scholars. In contrast to the latter however, the inclusive regional aspect disappeared in Magyar *honismeret*, which served projects of national emancipation in culture and implicitly in politics.

The newly established University of Pest (previously in Nagyszombat, moved in 1777 to Buda and later to Pest) could not compete in fame and competences with the established German and Austrian counterparts. In the post-Josephist decades the university was still a laboratory of state-led reforms, where a curriculum of “political-cameralist sciences”, including historical geography, statistics, Hungarian common law, diplomatics and the history of the Hungarian state remained largely on paper<sup>20</sup>. However, it did create a venue for scholars of Hungarian state science. Besides Schwartzner, the legal historian Béla Barits (1742-1813) published comparative statistics on Hungary, and the earlier source publications of Mathias Bél (1684-1749), György Pray (1723-1801) or István Katona (1732-1811), applied the methods of state science as well, that is, critical study of historical sources, statistics, comparison, and the employment of auxiliary disciplines such as diplomatics, genealogy, and chronology. However, none of them had the comprehensive and sophisticated view of Schwartzner, who introduced the modern concept of statistics, related to the functioning of state administration.

Schwartzner, who had studied at the university of Göttingen and was personally acquainted with Schlözer, was interested in measuring all the political and social *Merkwürdigkeiten*. As his monographer pointed out, his social analysis united the two separate streams of analysis of contemporary

20 B. Pálvölgyi, “A magyar állam-és jogtörténeti tanszék története a kezdetektől Eckhart Ferencig” [The history of the faculty of Hungarian state sciences and legal history from the beginnings to Ferenc Eckhart], in *Eckhart Ferenc emlékkönyv* [Festschrift for Ferenc Eckhart], ed. M. Barna (Budapest: Gondolat, 2004), 389-409; E. Ferenc, *A Jog- és Államtudományi Kar története, 1667-1935* [The history of the faculty of law and state sciences, 1667-1935] (Budapest, 1936).



scholarship of the state. His work was an inquiry into the population dynamics within the “social and political body”<sup>21</sup>. The combination of description and numerical analysis reflects the impact of English political arithmetic, possibly through the mediation of Süssmilch. Applying a similar conceptual grid and following in the footsteps of Lueder, Gatterer, and Schlözer, Schwartner interpreted his social data from a political-legal and historical perspective: the present state of the art had to be understood as the product of forces operating in the past<sup>22</sup>.

The most recent still-standing history of a state, that is, the systematic narrative of all state particularities (that is, of those who appear to have an impact on the happiness and value of a state), is called, with a Latin-German word *Statistik, Staatenkunde*, the present state, connoissance politique. Both the ties of this science with the history of states and politics, that is, *Staats-Klugheit*, as well as the differences between them are obvious<sup>23</sup>.

This study of “state particularities” is thus an encyclopedic study including several branches of scholarship:

[Statistics] is like a sea, which unites in itself innumerable rivers as well as plants etc. It includes geography, the arithmetics of the country, agriculture, law, from scholarship to coins and mining, (from) church symbols to the army etc., but in particular the specific pragmatic history of a state told with the taste and philosophical mind of a Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Spittler, [Johannes von] Müller, Schmidt<sup>24</sup>.

Thus, history gained a major role in descriptive statistics, in its capacity to establish causal relationship between the facts of different time segments<sup>25</sup>. The critical description of the urban environment in Hungary, illustrates well his analytical method. Relating the number of towns to those of villages, he regards the degree of urbanization in comparison with the German states and Austria; and also relates it to the intensity of trade – in a historical perspective. His conclusion is that the social heterogeneity and the feudal binds are the reason for the weak urbanization of the country, and hinder the modernization of production and trade<sup>26</sup>.

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21 Márki Hugó, *Schwartner Márton*, 89.

22 Schwartner, *Statistik*, Vorrede III-VI.

23 Schwartner, *Statistik*, 2.

24 Schwartner, *Statistik*, 3-4.

25 See here the theoretical reference work by Gatterer that claims that the historical explanation of statistics is the only truly scientific method. Next to Schlözer and Achenwall, Gatterer's work constituted the methodological basis of Schwartner's statistics. Gatterer, *Ideal einer allgemeinen Weltstatistik* (Göttingen, 1773), 15.

26 See sub-chapter “Verhältniß der Städten zu den Landleuten”, 112-115.

The author classified the population by ethnic categories and stages of education and improvement. The word 'nation' was used here in the sense of a status group demarcated not only by confession and rank in the political system but first of all by a common language and history. Cultural refinement was related to the ability of the national tongues to serve as a vehicle of scholarly communication. What resulted was a hierarchical arrangement of all ethnic constituents according to their level of improvement. Long-standing ethnic *topoi* from earlier descriptions were reinterpreted on the basis of contemporary learned journalism and scholarship, including Schlözer's works. This hierarchic vision made a great career in the ensuing ethnic historiographies from the region, but also in the general domain of scholarly and artistic creation, and was validated by a German-speaking international community of experts.

Similar to his teacher Schlözer<sup>27</sup>, Schwartner distinguished between "main-nations" and "auxiliary-nations". The former included the most numerous ethnic clusters; Hungarians, Germans, Slavs and "Vlachs", while the latter comprised the lesser groups of Greek-Orthodox Romanians ("Czinczaren"), Macedonians (dealing with agriculture), Armenians, the so-called "Clementiner" (i. e. people of Albanian origins, who in the aftermath of Ottoman domination left via Serbia to Slavonia, and arrived relatively recently to Hungary), Roma and Jews (103). Schwartner did not comment on his taxonomy, but we know that Schlözer used the distinction to differentiate between people with a bearing on the great historical events, while according the lesser nations a mere stunt role. Within the first category, so-called ancient or original Hungarians take the place of pride (although their accurate number cannot be told in the absence of a linguistic statistics, as the author remarks), that is, Hungarian-speaking "Asians" who colonized the Carpathian basin under the chieftain Arpad. The author distinguishes between these 'pure' Hungarians, who dwell in the plains of Hungary (while "in the cold mountains nowhere is the Hungarian language dominant"), and those who adopted the language later, when assimilating to the Hungarian social elite (the nobility). He notes the statistical minority of Hungarians in most of the free royal towns (Calvinist Debrecen is one of the main exceptions) – shocking news for his contemporaries – and explains this with the characteristic preference of the steppe people for the open spaces. He estimates their statistical extension as larger than those of the German, Vlach or Slavic residents (89-90).

The Slavs, the second largest ethnic category, are regarded with distrust and fearful contempt. Schwartner compares the past glory of the medieval Bohemian kingdom with the present domination of the French. He notes that the Slavs – although composed of numerous regional clusters they are taken as a single

27 A. L. Schlözer, *Vorstellung seiner Universalhistorie* (Göttingen/Gotha, 1772–1773), see Lindenfeld, 42-43.

category on the territory of Hungary – are the most prolific nation, and “wherever they strike roots, they wither the Germans and Hungarians around themselves” (90). The Germans constitute the third largest “main-nation”. This ethno-linguistic category unites all the settlers from the early Middle Ages until Maria Theresa’s Swabians, Bavarians, Austrians and other German-speaking segments, disregarding their rank, religion, and political status. The Transylvanian Saxons and the German Lutheran inhabitants of the Zips are all treated as the same ethnic cluster (97-98). They are presented along the known historiographic commonplaces about their industriousness and religiosity; even their still felt “cosmopolitanism” and their role as colonizers and civilizers “from America to India”.

The fourth main category is the Romanians (“Vlachs”) – a remarkable distinction in itself considering the condescending tone of contemporary scholarship. Indeed, the prominent role of the Slavs is not surprising (who do not acquire the empathy of the author, however) given the visibility of Bohemia and Croatia in the Habsburg realm, but much more so the attention accorded to Romanians. Did the author recognize Romanians as a significant political force? The ensuing ethnographic description seems to be at odds with such speculations; as we shall see below, Romanians are presented as numerically relevant, but not in terms of enlightened virtues. However, the sheer number is in itself a political factor, as the author, trained in political arithmetics, continues to repeat. Here we can put our fingers on Schwartner extending the quantitative tools inherited from Schlözer with a qualitative dimension. Indeed, Romanians (as well as Slavs) are seen in their “threatening” demographic growth vis-à-vis the less prolific Germans and Hungarians. Schwartner mentions with skepticism their alleged Roman descent (“is without historical proofs”), especially in view of the widespread German (and Hungarian) bias towards their moral character. Accordingly, “the main virtues and faults of this people, not without importance in the course of men’s history and in Hungarian statistics, are frugality combined with a dislike of work, patience combined with revengefulness, and superstitions without a healthy ethics”. Their allegedly simple lifestyle (corn in the garden, colorful dress and jewelry) is a further “proof” for equating them with exotic “people in faraway parts of the world,” and by no means as co-citizens (100). It would be futile to look for evidence of even so modest, but in itself significant, improvements in the Romanian educational system (more than 2000 new schools only in Transylvania thanks to Theresian and Josephist reforms!) in this schematic and biased look.

Among the “auxiliary people” involved the account there are two groups who intrigue the author, the Jews and Roma (Zigeuner). They figure in the same subchapter because of their “nomad” lifestyle despite the attempt of the emperor to settle them. It is noteworthy that while German commerce is regarded with respect, the Jews earn only contempt as people who “do not saw and do not spin, and whose almost only trade is commerce, especially the peddling in the countryside” (103-104). The trade in money is another common feature of the two groups, although, as the author notes, the lack of education makes the Roma

more perceptible towards Christian values, while the Jews cling to their “senseless superstition”. Otherwise, the Roma<sup>28</sup> too are portrayed along the existing historiographical conventions that cast them as the noble savages of the country:

The Gypsies are in Hungary, like everywhere under almighty’s sun, pupils who are recognizable easily and without hesitation, and who are not to be changed either through the contact with the local inhabitants, or through various *polizey*-orders, nor through the fear from the galley and hunger’s torture and contempt. Their main forms of sustenance are the fiddle, the sledgehammer, the horse trade, palmistry and stealing (106).

Besides their legendary musical talent (like the “Zigeuner Orphaeus” Mihály Barna and the “Zigeuner Sappho” Panna Czinka), and emotional compatibility with Hungarians (and alleged lack of “sympathy” with the Germans), Schwartner alludes to an interesting statistical detail, cited also by other contemporaries, namely to their Hungarian assimilation. It is not clear whether the comment “Maria Theresa let them called new-Hungarians, and they are very satisfied with this new name” is meant ironically vis-à-vis Hungarians or not (107).

The diffusion of the *topoi* of ethnic ‘othering’ should be interpreted against the backdrop of a growing scholarly public. The fact that Schwartner wrote his book around the same time with other important works with ethnographic accounts and incorporated them in the later editions of his statistics (Schlözer’s *Kritische Sammlungen zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, *Geschichte des Ungarischen Reichs und seiner Nebenländer* by Johann Christian Engel, *Die Geschichten der Ungern und Ihrer Landsassen* by Johann Aurelius Fessler, or the travelogue by the mineralogist Robert Townson etc.) may be interpreted as a proof for the relatively broad consensus about the staples of ethnic portraiture as common knowledge<sup>29</sup>. Like Schwartner’s statistics, the works cited above described Hungary and/or Transylvania along very similar interpretative lines. Fessler and Engel too distinguished between the “main peoples” and “subsidiary peoples” of the medieval Hungarian kingdom, according to ethnic descent, religion, habitat, occupation, and improvement – but also legal status, political rights and privileges. The political stance of these authors allows perhaps for more reciprocity: their acknowledgement of the Hungarian political nation rests on the latter’s respect for the ‘natives’ of their land: Germans, Croats, Serbians, Romanians. This is the ground on which, in their opinion, Hungarian national politics could be legitimately represented in the Habsburg Empire.

28 Schwartner, *Statistik*, 106.

29 A. L. von Schlözer, *Kritische Sammlungen zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, I-III (1795-97); A’ *Magyar nyelv-mivelő Tarsasag Munkainak első darabja*, ed. A. György (Szebenben, 1796); J. von Engel, *Geschichte des ungarischen Reiches und seiner Nebenländer*, Halle, 1797-1804. I-IV, vol. 49 of *Welthistorie* (Halle, 1796); Robert Townson, *Travels in Hungary in the Year 1793* (London, 1797); J. A. Fessler, *Die Geschichten der Ungern und Ihrer Landsassen. Erster Theil. Die Ungern unter herzogen und Königen aus Arpad’s Stamme*, 10 vols. (Leipzig, 1815-1825).

Such 'rankings' of the ethno-religious clusters strike today's reader as authoritative and patronizing. Exoticizing the lower ranks of the society can be read as a self-legitimizing rhetoric of the new state-employed elites of learning. Yet, the final purpose was more than that, it was the criterium of governmentality: such stereotypical and standardized depictions "insisted on properties that all people, though culturally different, should have. Such properties were conducive to the realization of a 'civil society'. These criteria served as filters; some people were fit, while others were not fit to participate in the construction of a new society. However, membership to this imagined community of builders of a new society was open to all"<sup>30</sup>. Thus, the most immediate function of ethnic taxonomies, created by the state-employed experts of state science and in particular, of statistics, was to chart the essential characteristics, in Linnean fashion, of each social cluster, in regard with their capacity to integrate into a functional society.

Thus Schwartzner's social vision is deeply grounded in the values and scholarly convictions of his time. Nevertheless, the handbook is an unprecedented comprehensive reservoir of ordered knowledge about the domestic administration, commerce, educational system, political organization of the state, which is its chief merit. The entire work is permeated by the will to strike a balance – with the aid of critical source analysis – amidst the growing mass of available information and within an extremely variegated learned public, where popular charlatans override the earnest historian, where uninformed but influential scholars abroad (Schwartzner does not stop chastising the fault of French in spreading inadequate or false facts about Hungary) are given more credit than the lesser known but thorough academics at home, etc. Indeed, the author's concern for a comprehensive, up-to-date and verifiable corpus of sources (scrupulously cited and commented in the introductory chapter) shows how difficult it has become by his time to gather and assess each voice in the international cacophony of learned press.

Impartial analysis demanded the use of a great variety of sources, both contemporary and historical, that Schwartzner enlisted in his introduction. These included original documents, after being submitted, according to the latest Göttingen methods, to a critical proof of their authenticity and content (one should note that Schwartzner taught diplomatics, and not state science, at the University of Pest, hence his expertise in the auxiliary sciences of history). He also consulted the contemporary scientific press and books (*Merkur von Ungern*, *Magyar Museum*, *Magyar Orfeus*, *Mindenek Gyűjtemény*), travel accounts about Hungary (by Samuel Benkö, Samuel Tessedik, Benzur), foreign press and literature about Hungary (*Magyar Hirmondó*, *Wiener Diarium*, *Hamburgische Korrespondent*, *Magyar Kurir*, *Magyar Hirmondo*, *Magyar Merkur*)<sup>31</sup>. He also used the results of the conscriptions effected under Joseph II.

30 András Vári, "The Functions of Ethnic Stereotypes in Austria and Hungary in the early Nineteenth Century", in *Creating the Other. Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, ed. Nancy M. Wigfield (New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003). 39-55, 39.

31 Schwartzner, *Statistik* 9.

It also shows his love-hate feelings towards the chief addressee of his book, the Hungarian patriot. These mixed feelings originated partly from his manifest loyalty to the crown (sometimes a rhetorical statement, at other places having the air of political opportunism), but also from the internal logic of his discipline. His statistical gaze was by definition the one of the imperial administrative center, having as its chief priority the happiness of all. In this centralist perspective, the interest of Hungarian patriots was only one, albeit no doubt important, aspect. This is how Schwartzner's fatherly worries and impatience at the enfolding of Hungarian scholarship on the international scene can be explained, his chidings of its "far too narrow domestic horizon", its "biases" and its "incomprehensiveness"<sup>32</sup>.

#### IV. TRANSYLVANIAN EMULATIONS

There are no studies on the scholarly exchange between the professors in Pest and scholars in the neighbor Transylvania, but there is evidence of mutual familiarity in the prefaces, introductions and bibliographies. Schwartzner's *Statistik* was widely known, and *vice-versa*, the book betrays a fair knowledge of recent statistical publications on the province in all languages. Especially the Lutheran Transylvanian Saxons had a considerable tradition in the practice of state sciences since the seventeenth century, and since the formidable impact of Martin Schmeizel (1679-1747), who had taught state sciences at the University of Halle in the first half of the century. On this basis, older patriotic histories were broadened and enriched by modern methods of source publication, geopolitical contextualization, and source criticism<sup>33</sup>.

The editorial article of the first Transylvanian scholarly journal written in a vernacular *Siebenbürgische Quartalschrift* also began with a similar categorization. Its author, Daniel Neugeboren, classified the Transylvanian population by ethnic categories and stages of education and improvement. Here too, Romanians were situated at the lower end of this cultural scale; presented as a population of noble (Roman) descent, although uncultivated because of their social and political status in Transylvania<sup>34</sup>. The case of the "two Hungarian tribes", the Hungarians and the Hungarian-speaking Szekler, both "noble nations" (i. e. having political representatives, along the Saxons in the provincial Diet), was more complex. The Magyars were in possession of a glorious scholarly past in the Late Middle Ages, but the centuries-long barbarism of the Turkish Wars, internal conflicts

<sup>32</sup> Schwartzner, *Statistik*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Ofen, 1809), 21.

<sup>33</sup> See especially János Szalárdi, *Síralmas Magyar krónikája*, reprint (Budapest, 1980), Georg Krauss, *Siebenbürgische Kronik des Schäßburger Stadtschreibers Georg Kraus 1608-1665*, reprint ed. by the Presidential Committee of the Society for Transylvanian Landeskunde, part I (Vienna, 1862), part II (Vienna, 1864).

<sup>34</sup> Neugeboren, "Ueber die Lage und Hindernisse", 6.



and religious skirmishes eroded “taste and scholarship”. Neugeboren closed his survey with the Saxons who, as he suggested, had the best perspectives for “Enlightenment and refining the taste”. Accordingly, Saxon *Nationalgeist* was enhanced by political (Saxon constitution) and ecclesiastic unity (among the Transylvanian “nations” only the Saxons were not divided by confessional differences but belonged to the Lutheran Church). This ‘othering’ ethno-civilizational hierarchy is again familiar from Schwartzner.

The focus remained on Saxon history, religion and education, but there was interest in the Transylvanian Hungarian culture as well. Telling is the silence about Romanians – the practitioners of Transylvanian *Landeskunde* had little appreciation for the intellectual achievements of the emerging Romanian scholarship, and for its emancipating scope. Lucas Joseph Marienburg (1770-1821), author of a later treatise on Transylvanian *Landeskunde*, had only a contemptuous half-sentence in regard with the “uncivilized Romanians” and their “foolish political attempts”<sup>35</sup>. This is but a covert hint to Transylvanian Romanian attempts of political emancipation, and the widespread aversion of the privileged minority vis-à-vis the underprivileged majority<sup>36</sup>.

The insufficiency of Magyar in scholarly exchange, mentioned by Neugeboren in the *Quartalschrift*, was a chronic concern of Hungarian scholars, as put also by György Aranka (1737-1817), the politically well-connected polymath, demanding “books written about our fatherland, so that all the sons and daughters of the fatherland have the opportunity to read them in their own language without learning with pain foreign languages” but also the works of classical authors<sup>37</sup>. Aranka pleaded for vernacular learning in order to broaden the circle of the educated. He argued that unless the written sources of scholarly innovation are accessible in the native tongue, the former would be eternally confined to the educated and multilingual elite. Against German advocates of improvement he urged the introduction of Hungarian as the language of administration, legislation and science, in order to raise the “dividing curtain” separating the educated and the ignorant, and to ‘indigenize’ Enlightenment. For the Hungarian emulator of German language reformers, the linguistic issues like translation of scholarly works, the writing of modern grammar, dictionaries and lexica, their diffusion through public libraries and museums, *catalogues raisonnés*, and reading rooms, was as important as the collection and systematization of data on the fatherland<sup>38</sup>.

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35 L. J. Marienburg, *Geographie des Grossfürstenthums Siebenbürgen*, reprint (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1987), 95.

36 See Klaus Heitmann, “Die Rumänen Siebenbürgens aus deutscher Sicht im 19. Jahrhundert”, in *Das Bild des Anderen in Siebenbürgen*, 33-56.

37 Cited by Sándor Enyedi in *Aranka György Erdélyi társaságai* [The Transylvanian societies of György Aranka], ed. S. Enyedi (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1988), 9-39, 12-13.

38 Aranka György, 43-59.

Similarly to the Saxon practice, Hungarian *honismeret* intended to convey an encyclopedic knowledge of the human and physical environment. The more knowledge the state accumulated about its intellectual and skilled capital, argued Aranka, the more effectively material culture could be administered and improved. Thus, “this subject [...] has little benefit concerning the society, but is of great utility concerning the patria, and it is the task of the noble Estates of the Land to publicize it”<sup>39</sup>. Yet the encompassing supra-national interest disappeared from Magyar *honismeret*. Its narrower focus made it similar to the practice of the Romanian *Școala Ardeleană* (Transylvanian School), initiating studies on national history and language. Hungarian *honismeret* urged self-assertion against the domination of a more advanced German culture, of the perceived cultural and political superiority of Transylvanian Saxons. I know of no Romanian corresponding word to *Landeskunde/honismeret*, and the only contemporary work known to me written in this genre was the one authored by Ion Budai-Deleanu (1760-1820) – and about Bukovina<sup>40</sup>.

What about the lower end of the ethno-civilizational hierarchy? Did the natives ever talk back? Romanian historians challenged the denigrating collective image with politically charged narratives. Sorin Mitu has demonstrated how the subsequent generations of Enlightenment national historiography attempted to come to terms with German, Saxon and Hungarian ‘otherings’. The ethnic histories of Transylvanian Romanians from the mid-eighteenth century until the Reform Era use historical and philological research to demonstrate the political continuity and noble character of this ‘fourth nation’. Their vision too was rooted in the aristocratic vision of society; it was not the existing political order they challenged, but only the relegation of Romanians into the realm of barbarians and thus their discursive and de facto exclusion from political participation<sup>41</sup>.

This feature became even stronger in local (i. e. in Hungary) emulations, colored by conflicting political attitudes. The Hungarian case is another proof how easily modern scholarship combined with conservative agendas; its social meliorism did not translate into mobility. Its improvement-oriented vision merely reconfigured traditional hierarchies of the heterogeneous society into new ones, without leveling them out. This ambiguity was clearly visible in a static social vision that classified society according to social and political status, backed state-led reforms of education, but did not intend to introduce a thorough transformation of the society. Ultimately, the ethno-national narratives emerging from this background could not be but polemical and dichotomist. The appropriation of wider European scholarly discourses was closely shaped by the immediate social contexts, and as long as their relationship remained asymmetric and conflictual, there was no chance for rapprochement.

39 Aranka György, 93.

40 “*Kurzgefasste Bemerkungen über Bukovina*” (manuscript, 1803), published first in Romanian as “*Scurte observații asupra Bucovinei*” [Short notes about Bukovina], *Gazeta Bucovinei*, IV (1894).

41 Sorin Mitu, *National Identity of Romanians in Transylvania* (New York: CEU Press, 2001).